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7 May 1986

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Mr. Vincent Melzac

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Dear Vincent,

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This letter is arriving later than I had hoped, but I'm in the midst of report writing--always the busiest time on this staff. But I do want to let you know the status of various matters we discussed at our last lunch meeting (which I thoroughly enjoyed--still planning to take [redacted] there soon).

I have been in touch with Father Yarrish to make arrangement for the transfer of Ecce Homo, and that will occur very shortly. He was most pleasant to deal with and is looking forward to receiving the sculpture. (I have enclosed the transparencies on Ecce Homo, as you requested).

[redacted] our interior design consultant and advisor to the Fine Arts Commission, talked with both Chris Middendorf and Ms. Odoroff about the paintings. When [redacted] made the initial call to Middendorf, there was some confusion as to whether you were asking for an appraisal of "fair market value" which could be used for tax purposes or simply an informal regional market value. Middendorf said he could not do the former and that, in fact, only one appraiser in town was so qualified: a Ms. Linda Kaplan. [redacted] then talked with Ms. Kaplan, who was tied up at the time but said she would, if we were interested, do such an appraisal. Later [redacted] talked with Ms. Odoroff, who said she could appraise the paintings for their regional market value. Ms. Odoroff also said that you had wanted to be present when she made her first visit to look at the paintings. If this is so, then we will need to take that into account. (Only belatedly did I check your letter, which refers to regional market value).

As yet, we have not asked any of the three to do the appraisal. What I must do first is schedule a talk with the new Deputy Director of Administration. (He is the second one to be appointed since Harry Fitzwater left!). At present,

there is a moratorium on any number of changes, renovations, acquisitions, etc. as a result of Gramm-Rudman. The earlier assurances the Commission had been given (by Harry) that there would be money available now have to be explored in the light both of the appointment of a new DDA and of the budgetary constraints imposed by Gramm-Rudman. The new DDA has, understandably, been on a very tight schedule, but I hope to see him before the end of May and go over a number of issues with him. As soon as we talk, I will get back to you, and at that time can let you know about the appraisals and where we go from here. As I'm sure you know, the Commission remains very interested in the paintings.

As to the bust of Vice President Bush, we will arrange to have it brought to the Agency shortly. I have been in touch with Mrs. Bush's staff about the transfer. It will probably be placed in a temporary spot in the Headquarters building and then displayed--with an appropriate plaque--in a permanent place in the new building once that is completed. I have talked with [] about a contact on our legal staff for your lawyer, Mr. Reinhart, and she has given me the names of two layers who have worked with the Commission in the past: [] and John Rizzo. They can be reached at []

In the meantime, I hope you remain in good health. You looked so well when I saw you and seemed so vigorous. I am enclosing a copy of the article which mentions the book we discussed. You already have that positive outlook the book cites as so important!

My best to Sheila and I'll be in touch shortly.

Regards,

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